	Commodities	wcight(%)	Price rise(%)
	Chillies (dry)	0.32	17.8
	Rape & Mustard Oil	0.27	15.9
	Arhar	0.27	14.2
	Fish	0.51	14.2
	Gur	1.75	12.0
	Salt	0.04	10.7
Price rise	Milk	1.96	9.3
(5—10%)	Masur	0.05	8.0
	Groundnut oil	0.56	7.3
Falling Prices	Bajra	0.18	18.7
(more than 5%)	Coconut Oil	0.17	14.2
	Jowar	0.42	10.8
	Gram	0.41	10.2
	Urad	0.15	6.3

(c) Monthly trend of Consumer Price Index for industrial workers and inflation rate based on this index for three years is listed below:

	1997-98		1996-97		1995-96	
	CPI Index (1982=100)	Infla-tion Ratc(%)	CPI Index	Infla-tion Ratc(%)	CPI Index	Infla-tion Rate(%)
April	354	9.3	324	9.8	295	9.7
May	352	7.3	328	9.3	300	10.3
June	355	6.6	333	8.8	306	10.5
July	358	5.6	339	8.0	313	11.4
August	359	4.7	343	8.9	315	10.9
September	361	4.9	344	8.5	317	10.1
October	365	5.5	346	8.5	319	10.4
November	366	4.9	349	8.7	321	10.3
December	372	6.3	350	10.4	317	9.7
January	384	9.7	350	11.1	315	9.0
February	382	9.1	350	10.8	316	8.6
March	380	8.3	351	10.0	319	8.9

Schemes for F.riucational Loans by Bunks

*93. SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH:
SHRI RAGHAVJI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether nationalised and scheduled banks have schemes of educational loans for students pursuing higher studies in India and abroad;

(b) if so, details of eligibility, limits, repayments, interest payable etc. thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the student applicants arc asked for furnishing difficult securities etc.; and

(d) if so, its need and justification thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI R. JANARATHANAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that a number of nationalised and scheduled commercial banks have formulated their own schemes to provide educational loans to needy students for pursuing higher studies in and outside India. While banks have different norms, generally no margin money is required for such loans upto Rs. 25,000. However, for loans over Rs. 25,00O/- margin money ranging from 15—25% may be required. Further, banks generally stipulate repayment by monthly instalments commencing from six months to one year after completion of the course or one month after taking up employment by the student, whichever is earlier.

The rates of interest on such loans at present are as under:

(i) Loan upto Rs.2,00,000/-	Not exceeding Prime Lending Rate (PLR) of the bank
(ii) For loan above Rs. 2,00,000	Banks are free to determine their rates of interest.

Educational loans are granted on clean basis upto a particular limit (which varies from bank to bank) on the personal guarantee of fathes/guardian of applicant student. Over and above the particular limit, in addition to the personal guarantee as above, collateral securities to cover the full value of the loan amount are also taken. In deserving cases, stipulation of collateral security is , reduced/waived.

(c) RBI has reported that no instances of banks asking student applicants for furnishing difficult securities etc., have come to its notice.

(d) Does not arise.

Report regarding'' Corruption in Customs

*94. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: . Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the report appearing in the Times of India dated the 13th November, 1997 regarding feeding of corruption in the customs by shady traders; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI R. JANARTHANAM): (a) and (b) The Government of India are aware of the report captioned "Shady Traders Feed Corruption in Customs" appearing in the 'Times of India' dated the 13th November, 1997.

After the Publication of these news reports, a team of officers lead by the Director General of Vigilance made surprise visits to the Custom Houses at Mumbai and Nhava Sheva Ports on 25.11.97 and 26.11.97. Different teams were detailed for conducting checks in sensitive areas such as docks, unaccompanied baggage centres and Nhava Sheva Port.

Several steps have been taken by the Customs Department in the recent past to simplify the procedures and combat undesirable practices. More important of these step* are:—

(i) Introduction of Fast Track Clearance Scheme for identified importers and commodities.

(ii) Streamlining of the procedure relating to clearance of unaccompanied baggage and processing of shipping documents.

(iii) Streamlining of all the existing procedures relating to cargo clearance with a view to making them more transparent.

(iv) Setting up of Public Grievance Cells for prompt action on complaints of delay and harassment.